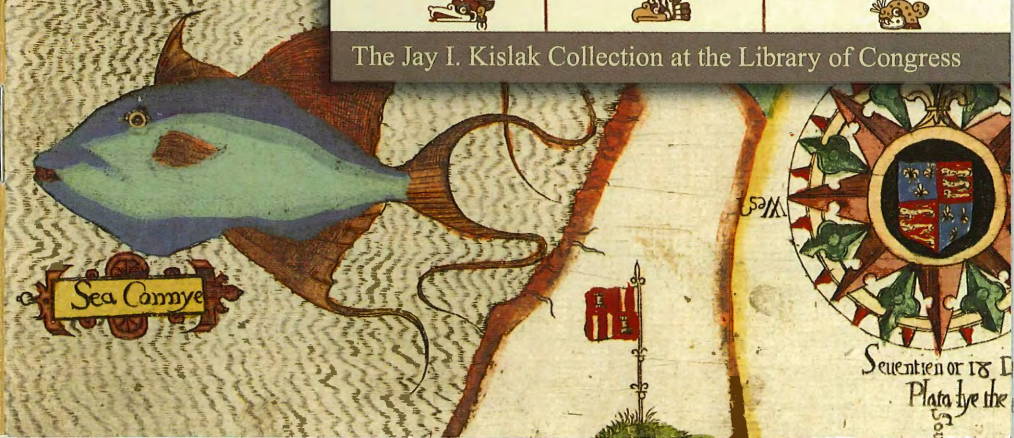




EXPLORING THE EARLY AMERICAS



The Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress





Above: William Bartram. *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida*. Philadelphia: James and Johnson, 1791. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (161)

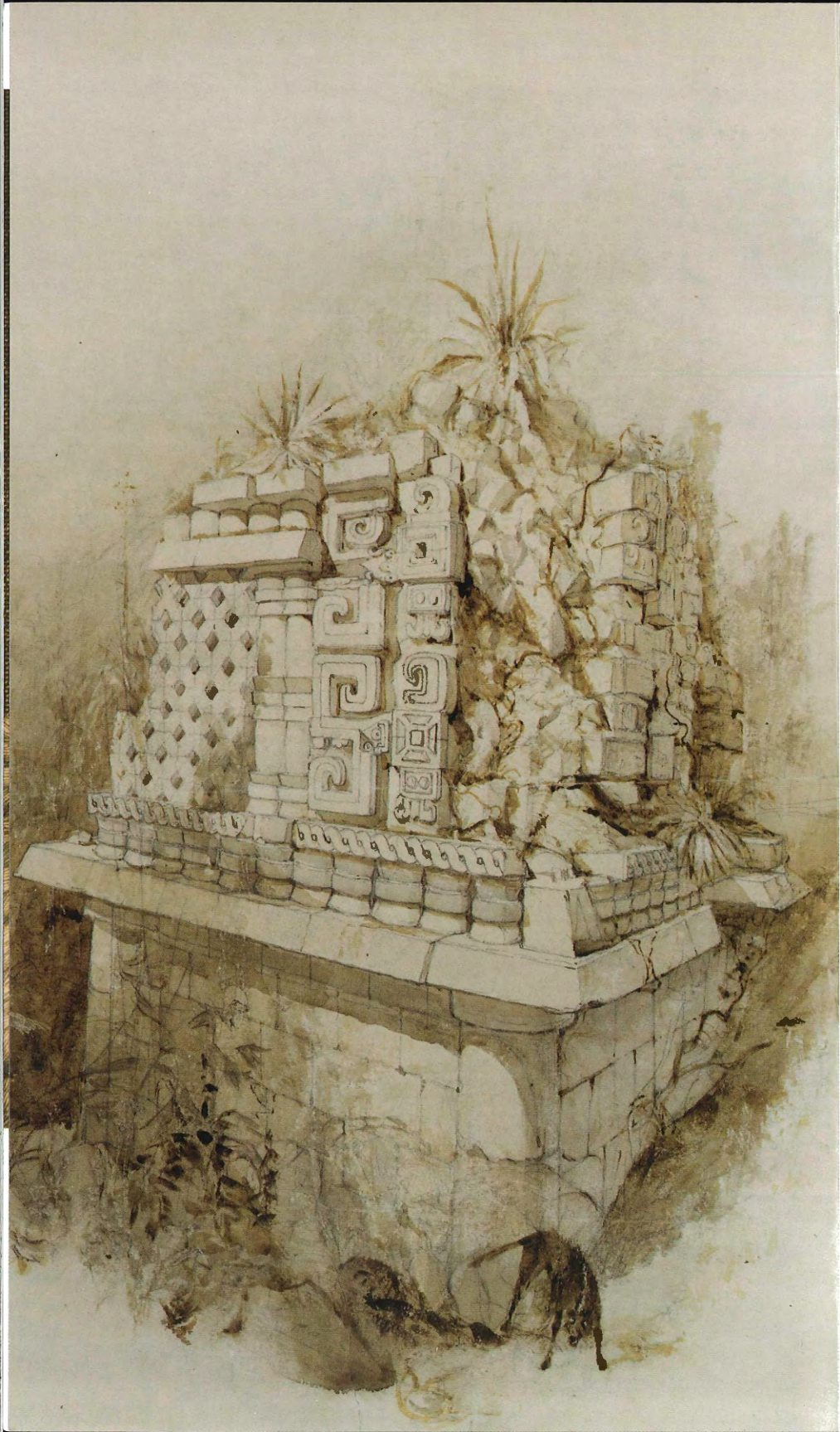
Right: Vase with Sixty Hieroglyphs. Guatemalan Lowlands. AD 600-900. Red and black-on-cream ceramic. K1372. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (33)

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the Early Americas features selections from the more than 3,000 rare maps, documents, paintings, prints, and artifacts that make up the Jay I. Kislak Collection at the Library of Congress. This ongoing exhibition has three major themes: Pre-Contact America; Explorations and Encounters; and Aftermath of the Encounter. Like the Jay I. Kislak Collection itself, the exhibition provides glimpses into the complex and fascinating past of the Americas. It provides insight into indigenous cultures, the drama of the encounters between Native Americans and European explorers and settlers, as well as the pivotal changes caused by the meeting of the American and European worlds. The closing gallery explores the profound growth of knowledge, particularly in natural history and geography, resulting from the encounters. This section includes two extraordinary maps by Martin Waldseemüller, created in 1507 and 1516, which depict a world enlarged by the presence of the Western Hemisphere.

This installation begins the public's direct and permanent access to a remarkable private collection and the collection's full availability for research and scholarly exploration. Throughout the exhibition, interactive stations enable visitors to learn directly from the artifacts, books, documents, paintings, and maps.





ABOUT JAY I. KISLAK

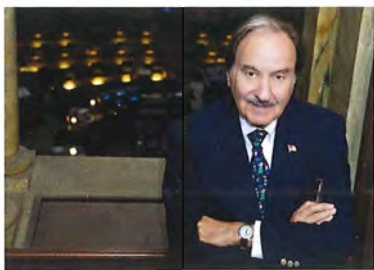


PHOTO BY TASHA TOLLIVER

Jay Kislak is more than a collector. His inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge have inspired a lifelong love of books. Mr. Kislak and his wife, Jean, are avid collectors with far-ranging interests and the connoisseur's eye for quality.

Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, Mr. Kislak graduated from the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania in 1942 and served as a naval aviator during World War II. After the war, he entered the real estate brokerage and mortgage banking business founded by his father in 1906.

Early in his career, Mr. Kislak moved to Florida and began a half-century exploration of the history of his new home. Attracted to rare maps and books, he began amassing a comprehensive collection on early Florida, the Caribbean, and Mesoamerica.

As his interest deepened over the years, he acquired many rare books and manuscripts that pertained to the early years of European exploration. Jay and Jean later expanded their collecting to include artifacts produced by indigenous civilizations of the Western Hemisphere. As a book collector, Mr. Kislak was especially intrigued by the culture of the Maya, who developed the earliest written language in the hemisphere.

Because of the gift of the Kislak Collection, with its exhibitions and programs of research and education, more than 3,000 rare books, maps, documents, art works, and artifacts are now available to the public and to scholars for study and enjoyment.



PRE-CONTACT AMERICA

To learn about the indigenous peoples of the Americas, scholars draw on the rare texts that survived the European encounter, as well as objects used by indigenous peoples. The richest source of Pre-Columbian historical information comes from the ancient Maya, who developed the most sophisticated writing system in the Americas. The Maya and other native cultures often embellished their texts with illustrations, recording or carving them on objects of stone, ceramic, wood, and other surfaces. This section of the exhibition draws on select artifacts in the Kislak Collection and presents them as objects that, like books or documents, provide us with information about ceremonies, wars, court life, alliances, astronomy, calendars, and the reigns of kings. Reflecting the strengths of the Kislak Collection, this area deals principally with the pre-contact cultures of Mesoamerica, a territory that includes most of the modern countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, western Honduras, and El Salvador.



Far left: Tall black-background vase with Teotihuacan-Maya war and sacrifice themes. Guatemalan Lowlands. AD 600–900. Polychrome ceramic. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (40.1)

Left: Monumental jaguar sculpture. Mexico. Southern Veracruz. AD 600–900. Painted buff ceramic. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (19)



EXPLORATIONS AND ENCOUNTERS

Christopher Columbus's voyages began a centuries-long series of encounters between peoples of the Americas and Europe. The Kislak Collection includes a selection of dramatic objects and records that reflect this complicated and extraordinary epoch. This section presents materials from the voyages of exploration of Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), and Francisco Pizarro (ca. 1475–1541) and material about the natives of the Americas they encountered. It also features the *Conquest of Mexico* paintings, created in the seventeenth century, which depict the cataclysmic encounter between Cortés and the conquistadors and Moctezuma and his people.



Above: Juan de Tovar. *Historia de la benida de los yndios apoblar a México de las partes remotas de Occidente*. . . [History of the arrival of the indians that populated remote partes of western Mexico]. Handwritten manuscript transcribed by Elizabeth, Lady Phillips, of Middle Hall, England, ca. 1862. Ink and watercolor on paper. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (98)

Left: Theodor de Bry. *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae*. [Account of Florida]. Francoforti ad Moenum: Ioan[n]is Wecheli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry, venales reperiuntur in officina S. Feirabe[n]dii, 1591. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress



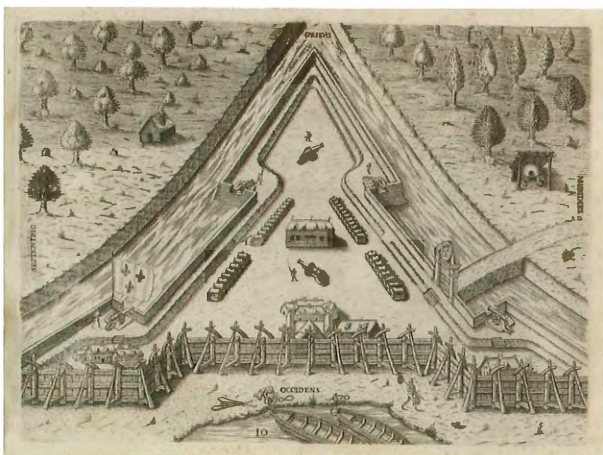


Conquest of Mexico: "The Conquest of Tenochtitlán."
 Second half of the seventeenth century. Mexico.
 Oil on canvas. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare
 Book and Special Collections Division, Library
 of Congress (96)



AFTERMATH OF THE ENCOUNTER

The encounters between the Americas and Europe altered the civilizations of both deeply and irrevocably. Among the many dramatic changes resulting from the encounters are the three covered in this section. "Language and Religion" documents the efforts of Spanish missionaries to convert natives and to record their languages. "Competition for Empire" reveals how other European powers, and eventually the newly created United States as well, vied for position and control in the Americas. Finally, in "Documenting New Knowledge," the exhibition examines two disciplines, natural history and geography, in which post-encounter Europe recorded the abundant New World information that often challenged their earlier conceptions and worldview.



Above: Theodor de Bry. *Brevis narratio eorum quae in Florida Americae*. [Account of Florida]. Francoforti ad Moenum: Ioan[n]is Wecheli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry, venales reperiuntur in officina S. Feirabe[n]dii, 1591. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (109)

Left: Maria Sibylla Merian. *Metamorphosis insectorum surinamensium*. [Insects of Suriname]. Amsterdam: Voor den auteur, als ook by G. Valek [1705]. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (164)



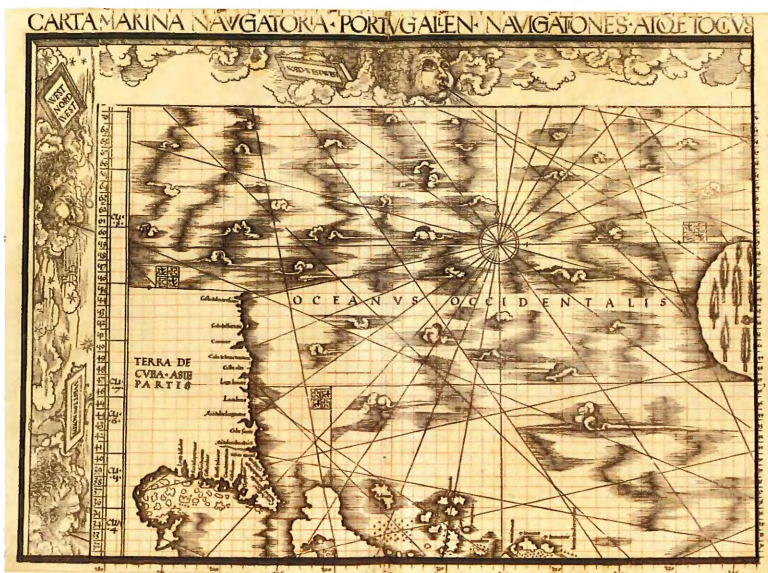


CARTOGRAPHIC TREASURES

Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 map portrays the New World as a separate continent, which until then was unknown to the Europeans. It was the first map, printed or manuscript, to depict clearly a separate Western Hemisphere, with the Pacific as a separate ocean. The map represented a huge leap forward in knowledge, recognizing the newly found American landmass and forever changing the European understanding of a world divided into only three parts—Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Long thought lost, the 1507 Waldseemüller world map was discovered more than a century ago in a castle in southern Germany. The map was owned by the family of Prince Johannes Waldburg-Wolfegg for more than 350 years and had rarely been made available for examination. The map survived in mint condition because its twelve individual sheets were placed in a portfolio by its original owner, Johann Schöner (1477–1547), a Nuremberg astronomer and geographer.

The original portfolio contained other cartographic treasures including the 1516 wall map by Martin Waldseemüller, known as the "Carta Marina," and terrestrial and celestial globe gores created by Schöner, which are part of the Library's Jay I. Kislak Collection. The *Carta Marina* is thought by some to be the first printed nautical map of the entire world and differs markedly from the 1507 world map. The name "America" is omitted from the 1516 map, the size of the New World is also greatly reduced, and the Pacific Ocean disappears. Among Schöner's globe gores included in the portfolio is the first-known set of printed celestial gores that he designed and printed in 1517. These annotated gores represent the state of astronomical knowledge in Schöner's time and are an improvement over many of the star charts of the period.



Above: Martin Waldseemüller. Page of *Carta Marina Navigatoria Portugallen Navigationes Atque Tocius Cogniti Orsis Terre Marisque*. [Strasbourg?]: 1516 from the *Schöner Sammelband*. Nuremberg: ca.1516. Jay I. Kislak Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (143)

*The acquisition of Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 map
for the Library of Congress and a grateful nation
was made possible by the generosity of*

*The Congress of the United States
Discovery Channel
Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest
David H. Koch*

*On April 30, 2007, Chancellor Angela Merkel, on behalf of the
Federal Republic of Germany, transferred the map to the people of the United States
of America.*

*The Library is grateful for the funding to display this map,
given in memory of Martin M. Gray and also to
George Tobolowsky for his additional support.*

*For their roles in facilitating the acquisition of this map, the Library also expresses its special
appreciation to:*

*Prince Johannes Waldburg-Wolfegg
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*The Library also appreciates the support of the Alcoa Foundation, Alcoa, Inc., Solutia
Inc., and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to complete the map's argon
encasement and its infrastructure.*

READ MORE ABOUT IT

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The exhibition is available online at www.myloc.gov/exhibitions/earlyamericas/. For a current schedule of exhibit-related programs including concerts, lectures, symposia, gallery talks, special tours, and films please consult the above-listed website.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This exhibition was developed under the leadership of James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress.

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